

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, September 5. 1691.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether an Alderman in the City, being a Justice of the Peace, or other Justice of the Peace in the Countrey, refusing to take an Information upon Oath against any scandalous Sin or Offence punishable by the Law, and subject to his Cognizance, or to send out his Warrant for the Punishment thereof; upon legal Conviction, doth not thereby violate his Oath of Justice of Peace, and become guilty of Perjury before God?

2. Whether for that Cause, especially if his Refusal be common and notorious, though it be not punishable by the Statute against Perjury, he may not be punished by the Common Law?

3. Whether it be not a plain indication that such a Person hath little or no sense of Religion, or of the Fear of God in his Heart?

4. Whether, it being plain Matter of Fact, that many addicted to the late King James are so far transported with Faction that they not only refuse to observe our Solemn Fasts, but oppose the Reformation of the Manners of the Nation, in Opposition to the Queens Authority recommending the same, such refusal as aforesaid be not an Indication that such Aldermen or Justices are no better Friends to the Government and Nation, than they are to Religion or Virtue?

5. Whether it be not fit that their Majesties be informed, and that they both out of Duty to God, and Care for the good Government of the Nation, take Notice of such Persons, and not suffer the Execution of the Laws to be longer intrusted with them? Or, Whether the Government of a Nation may intrust the Execution of the Laws to such inferior Magistrates, as may be justly suspected to be neither well affected to Religion nor to the Government?

6. Whether it be not the Duty of all good Christians, and of all sober People, who wish well to their Countrey, to Note such Persons, and to esteem them as Heathens and Publicans, or no good Friends to their Countrey or the present Government, and to avoid them?

7. Whether those pretended privileged Places in and about London and Westminster ought not to be suppressed, seeing that Men get into Debt, and goe in there, and live on other Mens Estates, to the ruining of many Families?

Ans. Six of these Questions came from the same Hand that sent us those relating to Bartholomew Fair, but all the Answer that's proper for us to give 'em at present is the very same we gave to this Gentleman's 3 Querys in Merc. 8. Vol. 3.

Quest. 2. A Person lately Condemn'd in the County of L—— for a Capital Offence, and the Sheriff on the Day of Execution being unprovided of a Hangman, Promised 20 l. to any One that would undertake the Office; the Criminal being therewith acquainted, told the Sheriff, that if he would give him 20 l. he would be his own Executioner, and was so accordingly. Query, Whether the Criminal was not guilty of Suicide?

Ans. This is a very unusual Instance, but since no Injury can accrew to us by the supposition, we'll take it for granted, and Answer in the Negative, that he was not guilty of Suicide, or Self-Murder, but rather the Author of a brave Action, in acting at once two parts of the Law, viz. Doing and Suffering, in which perhaps he may Challenge all Christendom for another Example; he satisfied the Justice of the Law by Dying, and did a good Action in being a Minister of the just Sentence of the Law; but 'tis suppos'd this was not the Consideration that prevail'd with him, but his Tenderness to his Wife; he knew he must dye, and 20 l. might as well be a Legacy to his Wife, as the Reward of anothers Office. If he was a thinking Man, I shou'd conclude he had read Seneca: *Ducunt Volentem, Nolentem trahunt Fata*: The Destinies lead the willing Mortal out of the World, but drive out the unwilling. But to prove our first Position: He was a dead Person in the Eye of the Law, and the Law directs no particular Persons to be Executioners of its Sentence,

but the Law had particularly Sentenc'd him to be Hang'd, which Sentence was as punctually observ'd, therefore the Law was satisfied, and he committed no Murder in being the Officer of Justice.

Quest. 3. A young Man that is almost out of his Time, hath been a wicked and lewd Liver, and hath wronged his Master very much at several times, so that he doth not know how much, nor nothing nigh the sum, and is now very sensible, and much troubled for it, and would willingly beg Pardon of God for it, resolving to mend his Life; but not having wherewithall to make restitution, is afraid that God will not accept of his Repentance: Your Advice and Council is humbly desired in the Case?

Ans. Restitution must be made either in Act or Deed, or else Repentance will be unsincere, and not accepted by God Almighty. Our Advice is thus: Either your Master is a good Man, or he is not; if the first, make a sincere free Confession of your Injustice to him, let him know the impossibility of present Repayment, Promise, and be as good as your word, to lay up weekly so much (you know your own Circumstances) in order to wear off the Debt (as near as you can imagine what it is) by Degrees, for you contracted it by Degrees, and desire his secrecy; if he fears God, he'll promise it, and accept of such a Restitution; and perhaps such an ingenious Confession will make him kinder to you than you can expect. If he be an ill Man, or a peevish, cross, covetous Person, let him not know you have injur'd him, but begin forthwith to lay up what you are able, in order to a repayment at least of what you think you may have injur'd him in: (if you understand Arithmetick, you can compute pretty near; and if you pay him, or his Lawfull Executors in some way unknown, it won't wound your Reputation, for the Cheat was also unknown. Set upon and resolve one of these things immediately, and upon your hearty Repentance (which will be evidenc'd by leaving your ill Courses) no doubt but God will accept of you. Direct your Letter to us, as before, and let us know your Resolves or further Doubts, for delays in Repentance are dangerous in this World's Concerns, much more in the others: You shan't want our further Counsel upon further Application to us.

Quest. 4. Perusing a Learned Author, who treats of the Vicissitude of Mans Soul from one Body to another, for twelve Generations before its Eternal Departure; supposing which to be true, may we not from undeniable Consequences conclude Nero's Soul to have its habitation in the Body of Lewis the fourteenth.

Ans. Your Author must be a Man of great Learning if he cou'd give a Reason for Twelve Transmigrations, more than Eleven or Thirteen; but supposing twelve to be a certain precise Number, 'twill be found above twelve Generations betwixt Nero and Lewis. No, Lewis carries his own unparallel'd Soul, and will be accountable for his own unparallel'd Vices.

Quest. 5. Why do such as would Shoot right Wink with one Eye?

Ans. Because there is but one right Line from one Point to another, but from two Eyes there are two Lines to one Object, which though they both terminate there, yet don't begin together; therefore two Eyes beginning at several Points cannot both of 'em Act directly, unless ye shoot with two Guns at once.

Quest. 6. How is it possible that several Figures can be Pattern'd out by one Act of Perception? for Example, How can a Man when he sees a Statue or a Stone, Pattern out both the Exterior Shape of the Statue, the Matter which the Statue is made of, and its Colour; and all this by One and the same Act.

Ans. 'Tis an Error and an Impossibility at once: All Philosophers have generally concluded, that Particularity is the Object of Sense. A Man can do but one thing at once. I know 'twill speedily be Objected that I can hear several Sounds



Sounds at the same time, and by looking at one Object I discern many more about it: I answer, that you can make but one right line from the Optick Nerve to such and such an Object, the other are only redundant Rays of the visual power which don't at all fix upon the other Objects, and that 'tis impossible they shou'd. The Mind it self can advert but to one thing at once; if to two, then there's no reason but it may to two thousand, and if to two thousand then to every thing, and so we shou'd not at all be different from God Almighty in his Prerogative of Omniscience. Therefore we must reasonably conclude, that when we suppose that we think of two or three things at once, (as in the Instance of the present Question) 'tis only a swift change of thought from one thing to another: For example, I first see the Statue, the representation of which is convey'd by the Eye to the Mind, which being inquisitive, wills the Eye to take a more particular view of the shape of the Statue, which it undertakes, and makes its second report, by representing the shapes to be so, so, and thus the procedure is gradual, and not all at once, tho' we don't deny but that it is much quicker in some persons than in others by reason of a greater aptitude in their sensible Organs.

Quest. 7. *Whether he is wise or otherwise, who has a displacency at himself for having said something impertinently or undecently?*

Ans. He that is not displeas'd at his Error, can never reform it, and he that reforms not from his Errors can't be a wise Man, so that the case is plain. But beside there's something more in the Case, for the Company to whom his Errors were publish'd, either consented to 'em, or disagreed from 'em; if the first, he ought to undeceive 'em and make 'em sensible of the mistakes they imbib'd by his means: if the last, he ought to beg their pardon, and recant, that by giving Honour to Truth and Reason, he may again be admitted into the number and Society of wise men.

Quest. 8. *Whether any Men seem to be more affected with their own Discourses than those who talk most vainly and absurdly?*

Ans. No, perhaps from this Reason, Wise Men have learn'd to see so much of their Follies, and the Follies of other Men as to be conce n'd and cautious in their Expressions, but vain Ignorant Persons have learn'd just so much as to be troublesome and positive, like Young Lovers, who will hear no other Characters of their Mistresses than Wit, Beauty, Charms, and a thousand Chimerical Notions, till upon tryal they find themselves wofully cheated with empty Bubbles, or cloy'd with a dull, flat, insipid o're and o're.

Quest. 9. *How far is it consistent with wisdom to Banter?*

Ans. So far as is not injurious to the Credit of your Neighbour, or the Reputation of Piety: But this is only meant in Jocular Discourses betwixt persons of equal Tempers. Again, it may be necessary by way of Satyr to shame some persons out of Ill Actions, when other Methods fail, and it has been often found effectual.

Quest. 10. *What is there in Pride that adds to Happiness?*

Ans. If the Question had been, *What is there in pride that adds to Unhappiness?* The Answer might have been too much for any thinking person to be in Love with it: Who more ridiculous, odious, and despis'd than a proud, imperious, Supercilious Opinionative Fool? who more loathsome and hated by Heaven? and who more uneasy to themselves? When a meek quiet resigning Spirit demeans it self too low for the Opposition of any thing but Vice, and there's encouragement enough to encounter that, when it's own Temper, Heaven, and the Converse of all wise, good Men become Allies, and joyn in one Common League of Friendship.

Quest. 11. *What's the Reason that People, such as Gally Slaves, and those visited by visible plagues from Heaven, do not grow better, but rather much worse?*

Ans. From one of these two reasons; either because they think their punishment Natural, or by Accident; or else because they hate God, and as an earnest of their future dismal State begin here in Cursing and Blaspheming that overruling Justice, which by reason of their Torments they will for ever Blaspheme hereafter: See the miserable State of Spira, who under his Tortures, wisht that he was above God. There are some other Questions sent by the same hand, which we think not fit to take notice of.

Quest. 12. *A Young Man being troubled in Mind, has often design'd to make away with himself upon some discontent, and therefore desires to know what may be the most effectual way and means to suppress any such thoughts: Your speedy Answer is desired before it be too late?*

Ans. If the Circumstances wou'd permit us, we shou'd blame the Querist for sending such a weighty Question in general Terms, thereby rendring it as unintelligible as if one shou'd send to a Physician to know what wou'd cure a Sick man, at the same time concealing the particulars of the Disease, and what distemper the Patient may labour under. The Case is the same here, and no particular application can be made unless by chance, which ought not to be attempted, for fear of applying wrong Remedies; which (if no worse) may give such a Disappointment as may enhance the Distemper: However, as Physicians, We say, *So long as there is Life there is Hope*, let the Disease be what it will; so we say, *No Misfortunes, no Troubles or Despair, how black soever, are remediless on this side Hell*. We Advise that forthwith we have a particular Account of the Young Man's Condition, with the Causes of it, and if our Answer mayn't with safety be delay'd till our Next Paper, he shall have it in Writing sent him, according to the Direction we shall receive: And in the mean time, let him Tremble at the Thoughts of that Sin which does not allow him time for Repentance, and give himself to Prayer as his Case requires, Prayer being always the best, and sometimes a present Remedy for the greatest Uneasiness of Conscience or Trouble of Mind; and let him consider that nothing can render him really miserable in this World, whatever suggestions the Devil or his own Weakness may falsely represent to him.

The Supplement to the Second Volume of the Athenian Gazette is now Published; wherein are resolved many Questions lately sent us. Sold at the Raven in the Poultry. Price 1 s.

Mr. Travesty may expect our Sentiments next Tuesday.

THE Preface, Index and 12 Numbers that complete the first 18 Numbers of our Second Volume, were lately publisht all together, at 12 d. price, that so all those Gentlemen that took in the single Sheets from time to time might have their Second Volume entire for 2 s. 6 d. and also that those Coffee-houses that did the like might have the said Volume sticht up by them for the constant Entertainment of their Customers, single Sheets being apt to be lost except patted in a Book. In these 12 Numbers, and in the Supplement to it, which is now Publisht, are Answer'd many of the Questions lately sent us.

\* \* The Second Volume of the Athenian Mercury, (is now Publish'd) resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions propos'd by the Ingenious of either Sex, from Saturday, May 30. to Tuesday August 18. Price 2 s. 6 d. This Second Volume is neatly done up in Marble Paper, with a general Title and Index to it; and a Preface, containing RULES for our Querists constantly to Observe in their Writing to us. Printed for Joen Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, where are to be sold the First and Second Volumes of the Athenian Mercury, (and the Supplements to 'em, containing the Design and Scope of the most considerable Books printed in all Languages, &c.) beginning March 17. and ending August 18. 1691. or any of the single Mercuries that are Publisht every Tuesday and Saturday. Remember that no Letters will be taken in, whose Postage is not paid for.

## Advertisements.

IN Fenchurch-street, over against the Rams-Head-Inn, at Mr. Edward Scott's, is a Tobacco-Engine, with Presses, and other things that belong to it; and a Standing-Press, Cutting-Press, Soan-Press, and Plow; with a Set of Boards of all Sizes, fit for a Vellum-Binder. Which are to be sold a good Pennyworth.

\* \* In Plow-yard, in Grays-Inn-lane, lives Dr. Thomas Kirlew, a Collegiate Physician, and Sworn Physician to K. Charles II. until his death; who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Business) undertakes to Cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Nose, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurvy, Leprosy, and Venereal Disease, expecting nothing until the Cure be finished: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries the evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and so destroys many. The Drink is 3 s. the Quart, the Pill 1 s. a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanse the Body of all Impurities, which are the causes of Dropsies, Gouts, Scurvy, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. With another Drink at 1 s. 6 d. a Quart. He cures all Fevers and hot Distempers without Bleeding, except in few Bodies. He gives his Opinion to all that writes or comes for nothing.